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**SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL-MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS
IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

January 1985

Prepared by the Federal Research Division of
the Library of Congress under an interagency agreement

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PREFACE

This chronology is organized by region, country, and date of event. The date of event is sometimes difficult to determine because it varies from source to source. Some sources cite the actual date of the incident whereas others appear to use the official news release dateline. When possible, the actual date of the occurrence is listed.

Analysts contributing to this chronology are Eunice Charles, Nancy Drexler, Robert Handloff, Mary Louise Harmon, Greta Holtz, Kenneth Liberstein, Moses Pinkston, and Rachel Warner.

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East/Central Africa

Uganda

24/12/84

The Ugandan Army offensive against National Resistance Army (NRA) rebels in the Luwero triangle continues. Government sources claim they have surrounded the "bandits" in their Luwero stronghold; the NRA denies this.

Horn of Africa

Ethiopia

00/01/85

The Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) report continued fighting against Ethiopian government forces in Eritrea, Tigray, and Gonder. In a report dated 2 January, the EPLF claims to have seized 6 Ethiopian Army camps near Asmara and to have shelled the Asmara airport to prevent the Ethiopian Air Force from bombing attacking EPLF forces. The TPLF claims that TPLF and Ethiopian People's Democratic Movement (EPDM) forces attacked the town of Dabat in Gonder on 8 January, occupied it for 5 days, and captured more than 500 weapons, vehicles, and other military materiel. Other smaller-scale operations are reported. The accuracy of these reports cannot be verified, but they indicate continuing clashes.

Ethiopia/Somalia

20/12/84

Somali officials report that government troops repulsed ground and air attacks by Ethiopian forces at Awdal in Togdheer region and at several points along the border. Clandestine Radio Halgan reports that Somali National Movement (SNM) and Democratic Front for the Salvation of Somalia (DFSS) forces successfully attacked Somali government troops at these locations. Similarly, the Somali Government reports its forces repulsed an Ethiopian attack on Balembale on 1 January; the DFSS reports that it defeated Somali forces attacking a DFSS base at Balembale on this date. The DFSS claims several other attacks on Somali government forces in January; these incidents cannot be verified.

Ethiopia/Sudan

00/01/85

In early January tension mounts between Ethiopia and Sudan as a result of media reports that Ethiopian Jews (Falashas) are being airlifted to Israel from Sudan. Sudan halts the airlift and claims it had not been aware of the operation because the Falashas had been boarding flights to Europe. Ethiopia accuses Sudan of gross interference in its internal affairs. Sudan counters that Ethiopia is using the Falashas in bargaining with Israel for arms and money. About 7,000 Ethiopian Jews were brought to Israel between November and

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January. Another 5,000 are in Sudanese refugee camps and 7,000 remain in Ethiopia. Their fate remains uncertain.

00/01/85 Fighting in northern Ethiopia continues to hamper famine relief efforts. Both Ethiopian government and dissident forces have attacked trucks carrying famine relief supplies and there are reports that refugees fleeing to Sudan have been strafed. In early January Ethiopian refugees are arriving in Sudan at a rate of 3,000 a day. Resettlement of people from drought stricken areas continues.

Sudan

00/01/85 Tens of thousands of refugees from Ethiopia's famine-stricken provinces and Chad continue to cross into Sudan. The massive influx of African refugees is straining Sudan's relief capabilities. Domestic opposition to the internal refugee situation is increasing as Sudanese feel that their basic food requirements are not being satisfied as a result of the acute needs of the newcomers.

18/01/85 Mahmoud Mohammad Taha, the founder and head of the Republican Brothers, a non-violent movement strongly opposed to the recent imposition of Islamic law in Sudan, is hanged at Kober Prison in Khartoum. The execution represents President Numeiri's apparent dissatisfaction with moderate policies to resolve a difficult internal situation characterized by a growing southern insurgency and a steady influx of Ethiopian refugees. It is intended to serve as a harsh reminder to the Sudanese opposition forces that extreme measures will be adopted to preserve the current government. The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement views the hanging as another example of Numeiri's arbitrary, undemocratic style of leadership.

Horn of
Africa/Southern
Africa

Kenya/Somalia/South
Africa

31/12/84 South African national radio reports that a new air service between Saudi Arabia and South Africa, with a stop at Mogadishu, Somalia, is to start soon. This announcement tends to confirm reports that South Africa's Foreign Affairs Minister "Pik" Botha made a secret visit to Somalia and Kenya in December to discuss overflight and landing rights for airlines serving South Africa. Somali dissidents claim

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that Somalia has also signed a military agreement with South Africa.

Sahel/West Africa

Benin/Burkina
Faso/Ghana

09/01/85 A meeting between Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana and Libya ends in disarray after foreign ministers from the three sub-Saharan nations fault Libya's foreign policy and its "insufficient economic aid." The leaders of these nations, in particular Ghana's Jerry Rawlings and Burkina's Thomas Sankara, are reputed to enjoy close ties with Libya's Qadhafi, but these relations may be deteriorating as a result of Qadhafi's policies.

Southern Africa

Angola

06/01/85 Two thousand Brazilian workers are to build Angola's largest hydroelectric dam on the Cuanza River under the terms of a \$500 million contract signed in Luanda. The dam contract highlights a surge in commercial and cultural exchanges between Brazil and Angola under which trade has jumped from \$4 million in 1973 to \$230 million in 1984. Angola's civil war is expected to delay ground breaking for the 500-megawatt dam, whose first turbine is to be imported from the Soviet Union.

18/01/85 The Angolan Government announces that UNITA rebels killed 200 civilians and captured 3 Portuguese workers in an attack on the Kafunfo diamond mine in northeastern Angola on 29 December. UNITA acknowledges the attack, claiming that it is holding 17 Filipinos, 3 Britons, and 2 Americans taken in the raid. UNITA also claims to have shot down a cargo plane which was arriving at the mine at the time of the attack and to have captured the pilot and two crewmen.

Malawi

09/01/85 President Banda reappoints all members of the Cabinet he dismissed on 3 January. The only major change is the return of Dalton Katopola to head the reinstated Health Ministry. However, Banda fails to name John Tembo, the former governor of the Reserve Bank, as secretary general of the Malawi Congress Party. This appointment would have confirmed Tembo's probable succession to the presidency following Banda's death. At the moment, the position remains vacant and the question of succession remains unanswered.

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Southern Africa

Mozambique

- 13/01/85 Two British nationals are killed by RENAMO rebels near the border with South Africa. This action is indicative of RENAMO's ruthless attitude toward foreign nationals who rarely survive kidnappings or attacks.
- 14/01/85 The United States agrees to supply \$1 million in military aid and \$150,000 for military training to Mozambique. The aid would consist of non-lethal items such as boots and uniforms. Although this new aid commitment is described by US officials as the result of a major improvement in bilateral relations over the past 2 years, many observers believe that the aid is designed to help quash the RENAMO insurgency.
- 22/01/85 RENAMO rebels sabotage the power line running from South Africa to Maputo. This is the latest of a series of attacks on this power line, and it reflects RENAMO's tactics which include disruption of basic services to the Mozambican population.
- 23/01/85 RENAMO rebels blow up a bridge in the south of the country, severing rail links between Maputo and South Africa. Thousands of tons of goods, ready for shipment to Maputo, are held up. This sabotage is part of the latest RENAMO offensive in southern Mozambique.

South Africa

- 05/01/85 Senator Edward M. Kennedy travels to South Africa for an 8-day visit during which he meets with South African business leaders, two Cabinet members, Zulu Chief Gatsha Buthelezi, and Winnie Mandela, wife of Nelson Mandela. Kennedy also travels to Windhoek, Namibia, to meet with SWAPO leaders before flying to Zambia for talks with President Kenneth Kaunda and ANC leader Oliver Tambo. The purpose of Kennedy's trip was to point out the failures of the Reagan administration's policy of constructive engagement. On his return to the United States, Kennedy announced that he would introduce and support legislation in Congress to cut US trade and other ties with South Africa.
- 23/01/85 All South African Defence Force (SADF) personnel seconded to the Ciskei Defence Force are withdrawn. The decision follows the suspension of the Commander of the Ciskei Defence Force, Brigadier A. A. Nell--a seconded SADF

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officer--and two of his colleagues. The number of seconded SADF officers in the small, battalion-strength Ciskei Defence Force was less than 50, but their commanding positions made them vital to Ciskei, one of South Africa's nominally independent homelands.

26/01/85 Nelson Mandela, South Africa's most prominent jailed nationalist, is quoted in a rare interview as saying his armed followers would call a truce in their war against white rule if the authorities would "legalize us, treat us like a political party and negotiate with us. Until they do, we will have to live with the armed struggle." Mandela, 67 years old, is serving a life sentence, imposed in 1964, for sabotage and for plotting a violent revolution.

Swaziland

04/01/85 ANC guerrillas make a series of armed raids on police stations in Swaziland to free comrades arrested there. In one raid the guerrillas force guards to open the cells of the main police station in the capital and free six ANC members held there. Police manage to fight off attacks on three other police stations and prisons. The Swazi Government announces that a nationwide search for the guerrillas is being mounted.

Zambia

00/01/85 Mushala rebels, who again begin attacking uranium workers in North-Western Province, force the closure of the AGIP Attivita Minerarie, an Italian prospecting company. The group was originally created by Adamson Mushala who was killed by the Zambian Army 2 years ago. The rebels, working in league with some Angola UNITA rebels, are highly trained and use sophisticated military equipment. Their goal appears to be to disrupt developmental work in the province as well as to terrorize its population.

Zimbabwe

18/01/85 Zimbabwe's Parliament extends the country's state of emergency for a further 6 months after the government argues that it needs the sweeping powers to deal with violence in Matabeleland.

24/01/85

Prime Minister Robert Mugabe sets March as the target date for the country's first national election since independence. The actual date has not been determined, but

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Mugabe wants the election to be held before the fifth anniversary of Zimbabwean independence on 18 April. Of an estimated 3.2 million people who are eligible to vote, some 2.5 million have already registered.

West Africa

Ghana

11/01/85

Ghana announces layoffs over 4 years of 19,000 employees of the Ghana Cocoa Marketing Board as a cost-cutting measure. While the layoffs reflect sound economic policy, dismissals in such large numbers could lead to labor unrest in a country where unemployment is already extremely high.

Ivory Coast

11/01/85

Ivory Coast is expected to announce sharp cutbacks--amounting to 90 percent by 1986--in the number of privately hired foreign experts working in the country. There are currently 650 such experts, mostly French, costing the government over \$100 million per year. Ivory Coast is also expected to reduce the number of French teachers in secondary schools. Ivory Coast has relied heavily on foreigners to achieve its relatively rapid and high rates of economic growth since independence in 1960. These reductions reflect local concerns with Ivory Coast's foreign debt and with significant levels of unemployment among young, educated, articulate Ivoirians.

Liberia

16/01/85

Liberia's only independent newspaper, The Daily Observer, is closed down by the government for an unspecified length of time and for unspecified reasons. The paper has been closed down several times since it began publishing in 1981 for being critical of the government.

Sierra Leone

15/01/85

The central committee of the ruling All People's Congress (APC) announces that presidential elections will be held in June 1985. An APC national convention will be held in April to choose the presidential candidate. At the last general election in 1982, President Siaka Stevens said he would be stepping down from the presidency, but he has not indicated if he will run in June.